

THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED:

1 1. A method for authorizing, authenticating and accounting users having
2 transparent access to a destination network, wherein the users otherwise have access
3 to a home network through home network settings resident on the user's computers,
4 and wherein the users can access the destination network without altering the home
5 network settings, comprising:

6 receiving at a gateway device a request from a user for access to the
7 destination network;

8 identifying an attribute associated with the user based upon a packet
9 received by the gateway device, wherein the packet is transmitted from the user's
10 computer, wherein the user's computer remains configured for accessing the home
11 network, and wherein no additional configuration software need be installed on the
12 user's computer to access the destination network;

13 accessing a user profile corresponding to the user and stored in a user
14 profile database, where the user profile is accessed based upon the attribute associated
15 with the user; and

16 determining if the user is entitled to access the destination network
17 based upon the user profile.

1 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising assigning a location identifier to
2 the location from which requests for access to the destination network are transmitted,
3 and wherein the location identifier is the attribute associated with the user.

1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising updating the user database when a
2 new user accesses the destination network.

1 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising maintaining in the user profile a
2 historical log of the user's access to the destination network.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the attribute associated with the user is based
2 upon a VLAN ID assigned to the location from which the request for access to the
3 destination address was transmitted.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving at the gateway device a request
2 from a user for access comprises the step of receiving an Internet destination address
3 from the user.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein determining if the user is entitled to access
2 the destination network further comprises denying the user access where the user
3 profile indicates that the user is denied access.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein determining if the user is entitled to access
2 the destination network further comprises directing the user to a login page where the
3 user profile is not located within the user profile database.

1 9. A system for authorizing, authenticating and accounting users having
2 transparent access to a destination network, wherein the users otherwise have access
3 to a home network through home network settings resident on the user's computers,
4 and wherein the users can access the destination network without altering the home
5 network settings, comprising:

6 a gateway device for receiving a request from a user for access to the
7 destination network;

8 means for identifying an attribute associated with the user based upon a packet
9 received by the gateway device, wherein the packet is transmitted from the user's
10 computer, wherein the user's computer is configured for accessing the home network,
11 and wherein no additional configuration software need be installed on the user's
12 computer;

13 a user profile database comprising stored access information and in
14 communication with the gateway device, and wherein access information
15 corresponding to the user is identified by the attribute associated with the user, and
16 an Authentication, Authorization and Accounting (AAA) server in
17 communication with the gateway device and user profile database, where the AAA

18 server determines if user is entitled to access the destination network based upon the
19 access information stored within the user profile database.

1 10. The system of claim 9, wherein the packet received by the gateway device
2 include at least one of VLAN ID, a circuit ID, and a MAC address.

1 11. The system of claim 9, wherein the means for identifying comprises an access
2 concentrator in communication with the gateway device.

1 12. The system of claim 9, wherein the AAA server is located within the gateway
2 device.

1 13. The system of claim 9, wherein the user profile database includes a plurality of
2 user profiles, wherein each respective user profile of the plurality of user profiles
3 contains access information.

1 14. The system of claim 12, wherein the user profile database is located within the
2 AAA server.

1 15. The system of claim 13, wherein each respective user profile contains
2 historical data relating to the duration of destination network access for use in
3 determining the charges due for the destination network access.